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# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

1st

IN BOLTON. *Mass.*

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PRINTED BY VOTE OF THE CHURCH.

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CLINTON:

PRINTED BY BALLARD & MESSINGER.

1851.





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D BOLTON, MASS. FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.  
2844099 A historical sketch of the First Congrega-  
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1851.  
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# THE CHURCH RECORD.

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## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BOLTON.

THE Town of Bolton was incorporated in 1738. The same year a petition, signed by twelve of its inhabitants and voters, was presented to the Selectmen, requesting them to call, as soon as they conveniently could, a town meeting, "to know where and at what place to erect an house for the public worship of God." The records show that after the choice of the necessary officers for the management of the public business, the first objects to which attention was called, and with reference to which action was taken, were to build a meeting house and secure the services of a Christian minister. It is pleasant to find that the early inhabitants of the Town thus recognized the truth that Religion is the source of real prosperity, and that the deepest concern of every community should be to guard its interests and promote its ends. They assumed it as a settled point that they must sustain Christian institutions, and proceeded without delay to provide the means to execute their purpose. Unhappily, however, the people were divided respecting the location of their contemplated house of worship. Several meetings were called to decide where it should be built. The question was finally determined by obtaining the signatures of forty-two voters to a written covenant



and agreement fixing upon the swell of ground a few rods west of where the Baptist meeting house now stands. There were twenty who dissented from the choice of the majority. The town records do not give the exact date of the completion or dedication of the meeting house, though they incidentally state that it was used for public purposes in the year 1740.

The next thing to be done was to settle a minister. The choice of the town fell upon the Rev. Thomas Goss. His ordination took place some time in the year 1741, and as nearly as can be ascertained, in the month of October.

It is much to be regretted that there are no church records to be found which go back further than December 18, 1782. Were it not for the re-adoption of the original Covenant, which took place February 19, 1783, there would now be no means of ascertaining the precise date when the church was formed, and what were the professions and promises of those who united with it in the beginning. From the copy thus preserved it appears that it was established November 4, 1741, and under the following Covenant :—

“ We whose names are hereunto subscribed, inhabitants of the First Parish in Bolton, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, knowing that we are very prone to offend and provoke God the Most High, both in heart and life, through the prevalency of sin that dwelleth within us, and the manifold temptations from without us, for which we have great reason to be unfeignedly humbled before Him from day to day, do, in the name of our Lord Jesus, with dependence upon the gracious assistance of his Holy Spirit, solemnly enter into covenant with God and one another, as followeth :—





"1st. That having chosen and taken the Lord Jehovah to be our God, we will fear Him, and cleave unto Him in love, and serve Him in truth with all our hearts, giving up ourselves to be His people, in all things to be at His direction and sovereign disposal, that we may have and hold communion with Him, as members of Christ's mystical body, according to His revealed will to our lives' end.

"2dly. We also bind ourselves to bring up our children and servants in the knowledge and fear of God, by His holy institutions, according to our best abilities, and in special by the use of the Orthodox Catechism, that the true religion may be maintained in our families whilst we live, and among such as shall live when we are dead.

"3dly. We promise to keep close to the truth of Christ, endeavoring with lively affections towards it in our hearts, to defend it against all opposers thereof as God shall call us at any time thereto, which that we may, we resolve to use the Holy Scriptures as our platform, whereby we may discern the will of Christ, and not the new inventions of men.

"4thly. We also engage to have a careful inspection over our own hearts, so as to endeavor by the virtue of the death of Christ, the mortification of all our sinful passions, worldly frames, and disorderly affections, whereby we may be withdrawn from the Sovereign God.

"5thly. We moreover oblige ourselves in the faithful improvement of our abilities and opportunities, to worship God according to all the particular institutions of Christ for his church, and in the Gospel administrations, and to give reverend attention to the word of God, to pray unto Him, to sing His praise, and to hold commu-



nion with each other in the use of both seals of the covenant, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"6thly. We likewise promise that we will peaceably submit unto the holy discipline appointed by Christ in his church, obeying them that rule over us in the Lord.

"7thly. We also bind ourselves to walk in love towards one another, endeavoring our mutual edification, visiting, exhorting, comforting, as occasion serveth, and warning every brother or sister which offends, not divulging private offences, heedfully following the several precepts laid down by Christ for church dealing, Matt. xviii. 16, 17, willingly forgiving all that manifest to the judgment of charity that they truly repent of their miscarriages.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us all perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

There are no means known to the compiler, by which the number of original signers to the above Covenant can be ascertained, or how many had subscribed to it as late as 1783, when it was re-adopted by thirty-one persons.

During the ministry of Mr. Goss, a division arose in the church, which resulted in a refusal of a larger portion of the members to remain under his pastoral charge. A council was called to take into consideration the charges preferred against him, which were, that his conduct was immoral, and that he assumed the prerogative of violating the wishes and disregarding the votes of the



church. The first was sustained, the second was not. The church, however, rejected the result of the council, and by their own vote dismissed him from the pastoral office, on the 8th of August, 1771. The meeting house was closed against him, and the pulpit refused to all the neighboring clergymen who advocated his side of the controversy. On the 13th day of the same month, the Town, at a regular meeting, concurred with the vote of the church. The next minister chosen by the church and the Town, was Rev. John Walley. His installation took place sometime in the year 1773. The church, as a body, was not united in him. Mr. Goss retained some warm adherents. The union of the two parties took place upon an agreement being made that Mr. Walley should ask and receive a dismission, and that the first covenant agreed upon by the church should be restored. The following is a copy of the compact:—

*Bolton, Dec. 18, 1782.*

“We the subscribers, members of the church of Christ in Bolton, now under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Walley, and we, members of the church lately under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Goss, hereby agree, that in case the Rev. Mr. Walley will ask and take a dismission, we will come together and sign the Church Covenant, as it was agreed upon when the church was first formed in this Town, and that we will endeavor by the grace of God to walk together as Christians, in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel.”

This agreement was signed by eighteen members of the church then under the charge of Mr. Walley, and by nine of the supporters of Mr. Goss.



The following is a list of the names in separate columns.

Nathaniel Longley,	Simon Whitecomb,
Jonas Houghton,	Benjamin Atherton,
Robert Barnard,	John Whitecomb,
William Fife,	David Whitecomb,
Robert Longley,	Jesse Walcott,
Jonathan Moore,	Thomas Sawyer,
Jonathan Whitecomb,	Jeremiah Holman,
Abijah Pollard,	Samuel Snow,
John Nurse,	David Moore.
John Whitecomb, Jr.,	
William Sawyer,	
Oliver Barrett,	
Paul Whitecomb,	
David Stiles,	
Calvin Greenleaf,	
Elijah Whitney,	
John Jewett,	
Elijah Rice.	

Before this settlement of difficulties was concluded, several persons who had sympathized and acted with one or the other of the before named parties, and desirous to enjoy a peaceful quiet by themselves, caused an ecclesiastical council to be held in the South Parish of Bolton, (now Berlin,) to decide upon the propriety and necessity of forming a new church in that section of the Town. The council consisted of the pastors and delegates from the churches in Westboro', Shrewsbury, Northboro', and Stow. After consulting together upon the matter laid before them, they recommended the plan of forming a





separate organization, to be called the "South Church in Bolton." They advised the members who might compose this body, "to forbear all special acts of communion with either of the societies in North Parish in Bolton, while they continue in a separate state." A covenant was prepared, and twenty-five signatures obtained. These transactions took place April 7, 1779. Soon after, the desire was expressed by some of Mr. Goss' friends and supporters, who had not connected themselves therewith, to be admitted to communion with the South Church. That church being divided as to the course it ought to pursue in the case, sought advice from another council which was convened Nov. 7, 1780. The members of the council agreed in saying that they "did not think it advisable for a church to admit transient communicants to the grief of any of its members." We are left to infer how far proscription abroad tended to secure reconciliation and union at home.

In Jan. 3, 1785, the Church voted to settle Rev. Phineas Wright with them in the work of the Gospel ministry, and the Town soon after concurred with the vote.

#### SETTLEMENT OF MINISTERS.

Rev. THOMAS GOSS. Settled Oct. 1741. Dismissed Aug. 13. 1771. Died Jan. 1780, aged 63 years.

Rev. JOHN WALLEY. Settled in 1773. Asked and received a dismission Jan. 31, 1783.

Rev. PHINEAS WRIGHT. Settled Oct. 26, 1785. Died Dec. 26, 1802, aged 55 years.

Rev. ISAAC ALLEN. Settled March 14, 1801. Died March 18, 1844, aged 72 years. Mr. Allen bequeathed to the Religious Society which he served as Pastor over forty



years, the sum of \$19,601 67, for its use so long as it "shall have or employ a Liberal or Unitarian Gospel Minister."

Rev. RICHARD S. EDES. Settled May 24, 1843. Received a dismission at his own request, Dec. 25, 1848.

Rev. JOHN J. PUTNAM. Settled Sept. 26, 1849.

#### DEACONS.

The following list is incomplete, but the fullest that can be gathered from the records and from the recollection of the oldest surviving members of the church and parish.

JONAS HOUGHTON.

NATHANIEL LONGLEY. Resigned Jan. 4, 1813. Died 1827.

ABRAHAM MOORE. Died March 7, 1803.

JOHN SAWYER. Died 1812.

JONATHAN NOURSE. Died 1827.

SILAS HOLMAN. Died April 25, 1847.

NATHANIEL LONGLEY, Jr. Elected Jan. 4, 1813. Resigned Jan. 6, 1828.

STEPHEN P. GARDNER. Elected Jan. 4, 1813. Died Nov. 14, 1844.

AMORY POLLARD. Elected May 26, 1826. Died Sep. 6, 1844.

SAMUEL S. HOUGHTON. Elected April 7, 1836. Died Feb. 23, 1845.

JONATHAN NOURSE. Elected Jan. 2, 1837. Resigned Jan. 5, 1846.

ABRAHAM HOLMAN. Elected March 22, 1841. Resigned April 3, 1846.

The deaconship of the church has been vacant since



April 3, 1846. Several members have been elected to the office, but each one has declined an acceptance. The brethren now serve at the communion table in rotation ; which custom is followed, not so much from choice, as from what seems to be the necessity of our case.

ADMISSIONS TO THE CHURCH DURING THE MINISTRY  
OF REV. PHINEAS WRIGHT.

*An asterisk (\*) is prefixed to the Names of those who are now dead. The parallel lines (||) are set before the Names of members who have removed from Town.*

	1785.	
*Lucy Houghton.		Oct. 26.
*Sarah Sawyer.		
*Dean Wyman.		
*Betty Wyman.		
	1786.	
*Ruth Snow.		Aug. 20.
*Nathaniel Oak.		Oct. 15.
*Elizabeth Whitcomb.		" 29.
*Jonas Houghton, Jr.		
*Eunice Houghton.		Dec. 3.
*Jabez Walcott.		
*Mary Walcott.		Dec. 30.
	1787.	
*Phebe Cooledge.		Oct. 14.
*Sarah Priest.		Nov. 18.
*Olive Priest.		" "
*Elizabeth Chase.		
*Abigail Chase.		Dec. 30.
	1788.	
*Isaac Butler and wife.		July 27.



	1789.	
*Charles Holman.		May 24.
Relief Holman.		" "
	1790.	
*Silas Holman.		June 20.
*Betsy Holman.		" "
	1791.	
Oliver Pollard, Jr.		March 20.
Rhoda Pollard.		" "
*Sarah Whitecomb.		Nov. 20.
	1792.	
*Joseph Butler.		May 27.
*Parney Butler.		" "
	1793.	
*Thomas Chase and wife.		April 14.
*Sarah Priest.		Sep. 29.
*Silas Whitecomb.		Sep. 29.
	1794.	
Lucy Whitecomb.		March 30.
*William Fife.		May 11.
*Patience Fife.		" "
*Abigail Moore.		" "
*Rachel Wilder.		July 13.
*Elihu Whitecomb.		Aug. 31.
*Samuel Wheeler,		Oct. 12.
*Anna Wheeler (Fife.)		" "
*Betsy H. Gary.		" "
Barnard Nourse.		" 26.
Hannah Nourse.		" "
*Silence Gould.		Nov. 2.
Daniel Greenleaf.		" 16.
*Sarah Greenleaf.		" "
*Ruth Sawyer.		Dec. 7.





	1795.	
*Deborah Bush.		Jan. 11.
*Lucy Ball.		Feb. 22.
*Betsy Newhall.		May 24.
*Abigail Nourse.		" 30.
*Rebeckah Sawyer.		July 12.
*John Sawyer.		Aug. 30.
*Mary Sawyer.		" "
*Rachel Moore.		Nov. 22.
	1796.	
*Sarah Robbins.		Nov. 13.
	1798.	
*Henry Moore.		Aug. 12.
*Sarah Whitney.		" "
*Amory Pollard.		Sep. 16.
*Phebe Pollard.		" "
*Jonathan Houghton, Jr.		Oct. 28.
*Jane Houghton.		Oct. 28.
	1799.	
*Jonathan Holman.		April 23.
*Eunice Holman.		" "
*Thaddeus Pollard.		" "
*Achsah Pollard.		" "
Mary Whitcomb.		" "
	1800.	
*Lucy Longley.		Nov. 27.
	1801.	
*Stephen P. Gardner.		July 21.
*Achsah Gardner.		" "
Mary Moore.		" "
*Stephen Nourse.		Aug. 9.
Betsey Nourse.		" "
*Silas Houghton.		" "
*Lucy Houghton.		" "
*Achsah Moore.		" "



* Eunice Jewett.		Aug. 9.
* Abraham Holman.		Sep. 6.
* Abigail Holman.		" "
* Louis Pollard.		" 27.
Thomas Welch.		Oct. 11.
* Louisa Welch.		" "
* Mary Holman.		" "
	1862.	
* Peter Nourse.		Aug. 8.
	1863.	
* Sarah Bush.		Jan. 23.
* David Smith.		April 3.
* Abigail Smith.		" "

#### ADMISSIONS TO THE CHURCH DURING THE MINISTRY OF REV. ISAAC ALLEN.

There is no record to show that the Covenant used by Mr. Allen was ever formally adopted by a vote of the church. He probably introduced it at the time of his settlement, and at his own discretion. The following is a copy:—

" You do now publicly declare your firm belief in God, the Creator of the World : that He is the Author and Preserver of your being, your constant and bountiful Benefactor ; to the manifestation of whose will you owe an entire submission, and a strict and persevering obedience.

" And you profess your faith in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and was sent into the world to redeem and save mankind from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

" You also believe the Scriptures to be given by the in-



spiration of God for the rule of Christian faith and practice, and for a sure guide to eternal life; that the understanding of man is assisted, and his attention awakened and engaged in the pursuit of religion by the influences of the same spirit.

"In the full belief of these things, and in this public and solemn manner, you now resign yourself to God; humbly and penitently relying on the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ for the pardon of your sins, and depending upon the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and the aids of divine grace to dispose and enable you faithfully to discharge the duties of the Christian life.

"And you promise by the help of God, stately to attend upon all the ordinances of religion, and submit to the order and discipline of the church in this place, so long as you shall remain among us, and can be edified thereby."

## 1804.

Simon Stone.	July 8.
*Abigail Stone.	" "
Wm. A. Merriam.	" 29.
Rebecca C. Merriam.	" "
*Samuel Haynes.	Oct. 7.
*Rebecca Haynes.	" "
Oliver Nourse.	Nov. 4.
Mary Nourse.	" "
John Whitcomb.	Dec. 9.
*Lucy Whitcomb.	" "

## 1805

*Curtis Pollard.	May 5.
*Lucy Pollard.	" "
Nancy Pollard (Houghton.)	" "
*Ruth Sawyer (Moore.)	July 7.



*Sarah Barrett.	Oct. 13.
*Olive Butler.	" "
Rebecca Nourse.	" "
*Elizabeth Nourse.	" "
*Elizabeth Guliker.	Nov. 17.
*James Townsend.	
*Sarah Townsend.	
Nancy Townsend.	
*Edith Woodbury.	Dec. 1.
*Wm. Woodbury.	" "
*Eunice Woodbury.	" "

## 1806.

*Eleazer Houghton.	March 2.
Rebecca Houghton (Fairbanks.)	" "
*Betty Whitney.	May 11.
*Asa Holman.	June 8.
*Becca Holman.	" "
*Martha Houghton.	July 13.
Hannah Colburn.	" "
Samuel Jewett.	Aug. 10.
*Betsy Jewett.	" "
*Mary Ball.	Oct. 26.

## 1807.

Jonathan Nourse, Jr.	May 31.
*Hannah Nourse.	" "
*Jonas Pollard.	July 12.
*Sally Pollard.	" "
Oliver Barrett, Jr.	Aug. 2.
Lucy Barrett.	" "
Amariah Wood.	" "
*Hannah Wood.	Aug. 30.
*Ephraim Whitecomb.	Nov. 22.
Nancy Whitecomb.	" "





1808.

*Josiah Whitney.	Jan. 14.
*Rhoda Whitney.	" "
*Silas Welch.	" "
*Betsy Moore.	" 19.
*Martin Houghton.	May 15.
*Polly Houghton.	" "
*Elisha Townsend.	June 5.
Lucy Townsend.	" "

1809.

*Calvin Nourse.	May 28.
*Mary Nourse.	" "
David Ross.	Aug. 14.
*Rebecca Ross.	" "
Nathaniel Longley, 3d.	Sept. 10.
Tabitha Longley.	" "
*Polly Longley.	" "
*Oliver Sawyer.	Dec. 3.
*Polly Sawyer.	" "

1810.

*Polly Stratton (Goodell.)	March 1.
*Dolly Stratton.	" "
*Samuel Blood.	April 1.
*Lucretia Blood.	" "
*Calvin Bush.	May 20.
Elizabeth Bush.	" "
*Betsy Holman.	" "
*Silas Holman.	" "
*Tabitha Newton.	June 17.
*Betsy Newton.	" "
*Betsy Whitcomb (Reed.)	" "
Rebecca Moore (Newton.)	July 8.
Mary Hastings.	" "
*Olive Houghton.	Aug. 26.



Abigail Merriam (Houghton.)	Sept. 2.
*Jahazaniah Houghton.	Dec. 2.
*Eunice Houghton.	" "
1811.	
*Ruth Sawyer.	May 26.
Asenith Sawyer (Fuller.)	" "
Dorcas Sawyer.	Sept. 1.
Hannah Moore.	" "
Sarah Moore.	Dec. 1.
1812.	
Levi Moore.	Feb. 2.
Betsy Moore.	" "
1813.	
Samuel Whitney.	July 4.
Lucy Whitney.	" "
*Nabby Wilder.	" "
1814.	
*Rev. Stephen Bemis.	April 24.
Moses Wilder.	July 10.
Becca Wilder.	" "
*Abraham Holman.	" "
*Azubah Holman.	" "
*Samuel S. Houghton.	Oct. 9.
*Abigail Houghton (Stowe.)	" "
1815.	
*Abigail Longley.	May 28.
*Samuel Stephens.	Nov. 5.
Lucy Stephens.	" "
1816.	
Nabby Pollard (Whitman.)	May 5.
Phebe Pollard.	" "
*Rebecca Whitney.	July 14.
*Elizabeth Whitecomb.	Aug. 11.
Calvin Smith.	Oct. 13.
*Ruth Smith.	" "



Lydia Sawyer.	Oct. 13.
1818.	
* Levi Sawyer.	July 5.
John Sawyer.	" "
Lucy Sawyer (Bailey.)	" "
Betsy Sawyer (Sawyer.)	" "
* Achsah Houghton.	Aug. 23.
Lucinda Houghton (Jacobs.)	" "
1819.	
* Abigail Osborn.	May 23.
Elizabeth Clark.	" "
* Joseph Hildreth.	Aug. 8.
Persis Hildreth.	" "
1820.	
Silas Nourse.	May 7.
Sarah Nourse.	" "
* Lucy Whitecomb.	Aug. 27.
Achsah Gardner (Gilbert.)	Oct. 15.
Laurinda Gardner (Withington.)	" "
Ellen A. Gardner (Minot.)	" "
Lucinda Whitecomb.	Oct. 15.
1821.	
Joshua Sawyer.	Aug. 26.
Esther C. Sawyer.	" "
Rebecca Haynes (Hosmer.)	" "
1822.	
Samuel Spafford.	June 23.
Betsy Spafford.	" "
Amory Hohnan, 2d.	Dec. 8.
1823.	
Joseph Sawyer.	July 20.
Abigail Sawyer.	" "
Thomas Welch, Jr.	" "
Zilpah Welch.	" "



1824.	
*Ephraim Osburn.	June 20.
Dolly Osburn.	" "
*Mary Osburn (Brooks.)	" "
*Abigail Osburn.	" "
Susannah Richardson.	" "
1826.	
*Nabby Hildreth.	May 10.
*Adeline Hildreth.	" "
*Elizabeth Kimball.	July 2.
*Harriet Walker.	" "
*Francis Whitcomb.	Oct. 19.
Alpheus Moore.	Dec. 17.
1827.	
Abba R. Gardner (Gage.)	July 8.
*Sarah E. Gardner (Jones.)	" "
Polly Southwick.	Aug. 5.
1828.	
*Lavina Houghton.	Jan. 7.
*Mary R. Moore.	Feb. 17.
*Lydia R. Moore.	" "
1829.	
Geo. R. M. Withington.	Nov. 29.
1830.	
Elizabeth Osburn.	April 11.
*Rebecca Osburn.	" "
*Susanna J. Osburn.	June 13.
Eliza Nourse (Reed.)	July 11.
*Mary Ann Nourse.	" "
Abraham Holman.	" "
1831.	
Nathan Sawyer.	Oct. 9.
Lucinda Sawyer.	" "
*Lucretia Hildreth (Blake )	" "
*Sophia Whitcomb.	" "





Martha Holman (Evelith.)	Aug. 26.
Eunice Moore.	" "
1832.	
Delia A. Gardner (Holbrook.)	Dec. 2.
Mary Gardner (Ruggles.)	" "
Octavia Gardner (Dupee.)	" "
1833.	
Abraham Wilder.	July 14.
•Lucinda Wilder.	" "
Caleb Nourse.	" "
Orissa Nourse.	" "
1834.	
•Hannah Houghton.	May 25.
Eliza Bailey (Patrick.)	Nov. 30.
Mary A. Wheelock.	" "
1835.	
Sarah Sawyer.	Aug. 23.
Mary Holman.	" "
Rebecca Barrett (Newton )	" "
•Phineas Moore.	Oct. 11.
1836.	
Cynthia Wilder.	" 9.
1840.	
Mary G. Thompson.	Nov. 29.
Louisa J. Parker.	" "
1841.	
Horatio F. Newton.	Aug. 22.
Roswell Barrett.	" "
1842.	
Zipporah Sawyer.	" 25.
•Willard Howe.	" "
Polly Howe.	" "
1843.	
Nathan Brooks.	" "
Abigail Sawyer.	" "



*Henrietta H. Sawyer.	Aug. 22.
Hannah Moore.	" "
Nathaniel A. Newton.	" "
Julia Newton.	" "
¶Lucy Pollard (Wheelock.)	" "

The following revised Covenant was unanimously adopted at a meeting of the Church, held Nov. 1, 1843.

" We whose names are underwritten, do publicly declare our established belief in God, Creator of all worlds, Author of all life, and Father of the spirits of all flesh; and, by the aids of his Holy Spirit, do humbly and solemnly devote ourselves to His service, to strive to yield to the manifestation of His will entire submission and strict and persevering obedience.

" We profess our firm belief in the Sacred Scriptures, as given by the inspiration of God, and as containing His revealed will; and engage to take them as our highest rule of faith and practice.

" We present ourselves for admission into the Church of Jesus Christ, in testimony of our faith in him, our acceptance of His religion, and wish to participate in His spirit.

" We regard this transaction as an expression of our earnest desire to obtain the salvation proposed in the Gospel, and our serious purpose to endeavor to comply with the terms on which it is offered.

" We do covenant and engage to and with each other, that, in consequence of our relation to the visible kingdom of the Redeemer, signified by our baptism, we will walk together as a Christian society, in the faith and order of the Gospel—agreeably to the practice of the Congregational Churches of New England.



"We do farther engage, that we will endeavor ourselves, and so far as in our power, will strive to induce all under our care, to live in all good conscience towards God and man; and that we will strive to be in charity with those of every communion who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

"For the faithful performance of these engagements, we depend, not on our own unaided strength, but on the assistance of the Divine Spirit, promised to all those who sincerely ask it.

"We rely for the pardon of our sins and our future salvation on the mercy of God, as made known by Jesus Christ. And we beseech our Heavenly Father to strengthen us, and to enable us to keep this our covenant inviolate; and at last to unite us to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

#### ADMISSIONS DURING THE MINISTRY OF REV.

RICHARD S. EDES.

1843.

*Asa Holman.	Nov. 10.
Jabez Barrett.	Dec. 3.
Hellen Barrett.	" "
Emily Houghton.	" "

1846.

Joel Barnard.	July 6.
Mary Barnard.	" "
Joab Barnard.	" "
Abigail Barnard.	" "

1847.

Hannah B. Nourse (Ball.)	March 7.
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1848.

Mary T. Houghton.	June 4.
Sarah H. Larnard.	Nov. 5.

#### ADMISSIONS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE PRESENT PASTOR.

1850.

Eleanor Sawyer.	March 3.
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1851.

Ellen E. Gardner.	Jan. 5.
Achsaah Barrett.	" "
Anne B. Sawyer.	" "
Sarah O. Nourse.	" "

Elizabeth Parker, (connexion removed from Shirley,) Feb. 2.

Mary Nourse, (connexion removed from Littleton,) Feb. 2.

Whole number of living members, 127.

Number of living members who have removed from town, 54.

#### BAPTISMS.

No. of Baptisms administered by Mr. Wright,	291
" " " Mr. Allen,	399
" " " Mr. Edes,	17
" " " Mr. Putnam,	2
Total	709

#### CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

In 1792, during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Wright, the church adopted Thirteen Rules and Regulations for the discipline of its members. In Nov., 1843, these were





abolished by a unanimous vote, and the following Standing Rule was adopted in the place of them:—*“Any member of the church, who, being notoriously immoral, shall refuse to withdraw from the church at the request of the Pastor, may be dismissed by a vote of two-thirds of all the members.”*

## CHURCH FUND. 1823870

The church now holds a fund, amounting on the 6th day of January, 1851, to \$419 26. For many years it was the practice to assess a small tax, generally the sum of twenty-five cents per annum, upon the individual members. This proved to be more than sufficient to defray the ordinary expenditures, and to meet such calls for charity as the church felt especially bound to heed. When the fund had accumulated to nearly its present amount, it was deemed best to dispense with further contributions, and to use its income to pay the annual expenses of the church.

## THE WALLEY FUND.

Rev. John Walley, then of Roxbury, Mass., made by Will, a donation of \$44 44 1-3, to the care of the minister and deacons of the church, “the interest of which is by them to be annually and forever laid out for common Bibles, and the same to be given to such persons in the parish as they shall judge to be the fittest objects of such a charity.” This money was loaned to the Town of Bolton, Jan. 1, 1800, and an obligation signed by the Treasurer, binding himself and his successors in office “to pay, or cause to be paid unto Plineas Wright, Nathaniel Longley, David Nourse, and Abraham Moore, or their



successors in the offices of Clerk and Deacons of said church, the full sum of forty-four dollars and forty-four cents and one third of a cent, within one year from the above date, with lawful interest for the same until paid." This money has remained in the hands of the Town until the present time. Interest had been received on it January 2, 1847, to the amount of \$125 28, and expended according to the directions of the donor. The fund is so small that it has not been thought best to collect the interest annually, but after intervals varying from four to twenty years. There are families occasionally to be found within our borders, which the gift of a Bible will relieve of other than spiritual burdens.

#### COMMUNION PLATE.

The church in 1806, received the gift of a Silver Tankard from Col. Asa Whitecomb. In accordance with a vote passed at the annual meeting in January, 1844, and with the consent of the relatives of Mr. Whitecomb, this tankard was sold for \$30 80. Of the proceeds, \$9 25 was expended in the purchase of a new double-gilt baptismal basin, and with the remainder, (save six dollars taken from the church fund,) two silver-gilt plates, and a large folio Bible, for the use of the pulpit, were procured. The silver goblets, <sup>eigh-</sup>~~ten~~ in number, now used in the communion service, were received in 1827, and bore this inscription:—"Bequest of Rufus Nourse, late of the City of Baltimore, to the church in Bolton." The new silver-gilt flagons were first used in April, 1845. The present communion table and chairs were procured in 1844, after the remodeling of the meeting house was completed.



## COMMUNION SEASONS.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed by this church six times in the year; namely, the first Sunday in each of the months of January, March, May, July, September and November. This regulation was adopted by a vote of the church March 3, 1850. Previously to that time the communion seasons had been more frequent, particularly in the Spring, Summer and Autumn months.

## THE STATE OF THE CHURCH RECORDS.

There are, undoubtedly, inaccuracies in this historical sketch. They could not well be avoided, since the records of the proceedings of the church for more than forty years after its organization are not accessible. The most probable conjecture concerning these papers is, that in the heat of party strife, or after controversy had wasted its strength, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the peculiar character they bore, caused their destruction. The early records of the Town refer but seldom and indirectly to matters connected with the church. The traditional accounts to be gathered from the oldest residents are uncertain and fragmentary; so that the materials have been exceedingly scanty from which to prepare a portion of this record. But, as the dust of time is every year settling more thickly upon past transactions, and the individuals, whose memory is the only authority we have for some interesting incidents connected with our body, can remain here but a little while longer, the plan may not prove ill advised, to have collected and put together the scraps of history which are found on the preceding pages. Where there is a want of completeness as to names and



dates, such as will be observed in the list of Deacons, the order and time of whose election, resignation and death, are not set forth, it may be proper to say, that a somewhat greater deficiency than marks this transcript, is to be found in the original records. The deceased members of the church are denoted by a mark which may in some cases be misapplied, and in other instances wrongly omitted. It would, without doubt, be gratifying to many to find the date of the death of their friends placed on a line with their names. The plan of thus giving fullness to that portion of the record was undertaken, but of necessity abandoned. The removal of members from town is likewise indicated in the catalogue, but the places of their present residence are often so difficult to be ascertained, that it was deemed best to omit the mention of them altogether.

#### CONCLUSION.

This branch of the Church Universal has an unwritten history. The blank leaves of its record book will bear the inscription of its future works, it may be to many generations to come. God grant that they may show that the ordinances of religion have here been held in sacred regard,—that the spirit of Christ has been cultivated, and his example followed by no small band of disciples, united together in the fellowship of love, and striving with hearty zeal to lay hold on eternal life. Let the Piety, the Philanthropy, and the Charity of our Church, which has been watered thus long by the dews of heavenly grace, increase, if it be possible, a hundred fold.

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